did 50 years ago. I learned from such people. 281

1. Tanning, /no·ro, in the broadest sense (usually women's work). [462]

a) The process itself involves the following techniques: The freshly removed skin is first spread out to dry with the hairy side up, usually on the hut so that it will be safe from dogs.

When the skin is dry and hard, it is softened up with the juice of succulent plants which are pounded (*/a·mai) into the fleshy side of the skin. [824]

The excess liquid is poured off and the skin rolled up so that it will not get dry too soon. The woman then kneels on the roll, after she has spread out flat just as much as she can work at a time. The fleshy side of the skin is sprinkled with sandstone powder and briskly rubbed (/nũũ) with a piece of tanning stone (*/kxoms) the size of one's fist. [413]

When the sandstone has rubbed off all the scraps of meat, they let the skin get half dry again, full it (/no·ro in the narrower sense) and knead it then as they would laundry and then rub soft fat into the outer side.

The skin is now certainly dry and pliable but if it were soaked through by the rain, it would again become hard and brittle when dry. To prevent that, the skin is tanned with the crushed and softened red bast of the Acacia horrida Willd. (*basi, probably borrowed). Then the skin is placed for an hour in red bast lye, with the bark bundles wrapped in it, until it is saturated. It is half dried again, [234], and then spread out for about another half hour in a flat trench and covered (//ha/n) with slightly dampened sand. In conclusion a man takes the skin by the tail, another by the head, women and children grasp the sides and they pull and stretch it smooth. [824] [386]

Finally dried in the sun, the skin is permanently soft, rainproof and dyed a pretty reddish-brown on the inside.

b) Useful objects made from tanned skins are: α) Floor skins, ǂgo'a-n. They are the carpets of the huts. Young cattle, goats, sheep, springbok and duikerbok furnish the material. A single skin of this kind is called ǂgo'a-s. ǂgo'a-b is the large rug which consists of about six floor skins that are cut and sewn together with strips of sinews. 281 352

β) Skin covers, "Kompersen," ǂna-mti, made from sheep, jackal, Otocyon megalotis Desmar), rock-rabbit or lynx skin, used as a fur cloak or kaross, a comfortable, solid and warm article of clothing for women (see Plate X.). Today it has been almost entirely replaced by European clothing. 281 291 [177]

The arrival of the young wife, tara·s, in the husband's village is celebrated again with slaughtering, a greeting to which she is entitled (cf. folk tale, LVIII). 585 [601]

Today only a few Hottentots could afford several wives, as ancient custom allows, because of their impoverishment. Also the relationship between the sexes has deteriorated to such an extent that it is not necessary for a man to have the intimate relationship with several wives officially sanctioned. 177 595

2. Intra-Family Relationships

a) In the relationship of husband and wife, the honored position of the wife differentiates the family of the Hottentots clearly from that of the Hereros. The woman is considered the mistress of the hut in all household matters. Thus under certain circumstances she has the right to refuse her husband the right to enter the hut. She manages the food supply. Her husband asks for milk and she gives it to him. In addition, the fact that she does the most important job in the household of a herdsman, namely the milking, differentiates her from the wife of a Herero. The honored position of the woman in the marriage relationship does not prevent occasional quarrels in which the husband makes full use of his physical superiority. 593 171 562 462

Only barrenness lowers the esteem of a wife permanently.

b) The relationship of the parents, //gũ·ǂra, to the children, /gõ·an, 864 [601] Caring for small children, aba·, is naturally the mother's business. She carries her child on her back in a lamb skin called //hani·b (see Plate X).

"//Haniba !kxara !", i.e. Drag the aba skin after you!" is shouted to little children when they sneeze (sic!). In other cases I heard the mother with the sneezing child "!o(man kxao !," i.e. "push your rear !" (ᵉ·an seems to be a reflexive particle). Both wishes refer to the eagerly-awaited first attempts of the child to walk. The baby tries to get up from its helpless sitting position on the floor and at first always falls back again on its rear. When it can walk, it drags the aba skin, which it has by then outgrown, after itself and uses it as a toy. 854 866

[300] The parents assign each child, even grown ones, a certain cow for its use (ᵉnaǂam, i.e., placing to the mouth). The child may only milk for itself this one cow, ǂ/bes, mornings and evenings. During the day, when the cattle are in the pasture, he is served what is left of his milk. Likewise those who are married sometimes get four or five cows from their parents. 855 422 [585]

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also grouped to the left of the man's hut, chief of whom are the */gan* or servants.

342

The huts themselves (*oms*) are much superior to those of the Bushmen, and well adapted to the nomadic life of the people (Plate XIV).[1] They provide an airy shelter from the wind and the sun, are light in weight, simple in material and structure, and can easily be taken down, packed up, transported, and rebuilt. The skeleton is a frame of long light pieces of supple undressed wood. Twenty to sixty of these, according to the size of the hut, are planted vertically in holes dug into the ground in a circle of three to five yards diameter. Their upper ends are then bent inward and tied together in the centre, until the framework is complete. The whole frame thus approximates to a hemisphere, varying in height but averaging about two and a half yards. Its erection is the work of the men. Withes are now twisted round the structure, and fastened on outside. Over these are tied layers of rush mats constructed by the women from reed grass, usually *Cyperus sp.* The stalks of reed are bored through and sewn together with bark thread. The finished mats are then laid round and directly over the wooden framework. Long mats are placed edgewise on the ground and tied to the sticks, other mats are placed higher up and tied in a similar manner, and one or two additional mats form the roofing. The hut when complete is of beehive shape. It is cool in the summer, when the rushes contract in the heat and allow the air to play freely through the hut; perfectly dry in the rain, when the rushes swell and grip closely to one another; while a lining of prepared skins makes it snug and warm in the winter. When the camp is shifted, the structure is taken down; the mats are rolled up and the sticks are tied into bundles. They are then transported to the site of the next encampment on the backs of oxen, some of which are specially trained to carry packs, and are there again put together.

[462]

[492]

The main entrance to the hut is usually opposed to the direction of the prevailing wind, and on the other side is left a smaller opening. The main opening can be closed by means of a piece of rush matting just fitting into it, and attached to a cross-pole situated about three feet from the ground. This mat door can be rolled up and fastened or let down. The position of the opening is easily changed from one side to another, according to the direction of the wind, by shifting the

[1] By far the most complete description of the Hottentot hut is given by Schultze, *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, 227–32; cf. also Kolb, *op. cit.*, 108–9; Vedder, *Native Races*, 108–10; Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 308–9.

233 361 usual then trek away to new pasture lands. The change of residence as a rule does not go very far, for the rights of neighbouring tribes have to be respected; but within the tribal lands movement is usually unrestricted.

233 361 484 492 [415] The men fill their water-bags, made from the stomachs of cattle or antelope, put together the last portions of veldkos and dried meat, and then, with the help of their wives and children, take down their huts, roll up the mats, and tie the sticks into bundles, which are all fastened with straps on the backs of pack-oxen. Other oxen bear the household possessions and utensils, others again are ridden by the women and those too weak to go on foot, and the caravan sets forth. The adolescent children drive the calves and small stock slowly before them, so that the animals can pasture by the way and the lambs keep up with them. The drivers of small stock therefore break up in the morning before their elders. The horned cattle are driven too fat on the march to feed for any length of time, and hence are turned loose when a halt is made at night. The women [222] as they go along seek edible bulbs and berries, while the men supervise matters in general; and so they roam on till a suitable spot for the new encampment has been found. As long as sufficient water and grass are to be had the people will remain camped in the most desolate spot imaginable; but when the need arises they will move on again. Their encampments are never permanent.

462 512 517 The principal occupation of the people is to look after their herds and flocks. Even this is light, and employs only the younger members of the family or the servants. The men spend most of their time in hunting or in visiting their traps and snares. When not pressed by hunger, however, they will remain about the huts, perhaps occupying themselves in the manufacture of weapons and utensils, or else in chatting to one another, with the inevitable pipe circulating among them. The women go out seeking veldkos, or busy themselves at home with such domestic tasks as the weaving of mats and the working of skins. In this way the day is spent somewhat 512 517 leisurely. Only with the sinking of the sun and the return of the herds from pasture does the camp liven up. Somewhere, perhaps, there is a feast needing to be celebrated, and dancing and music help to make it joyful; or, after the evening fire has been lit, the food prepared and eaten, the older people assemble round one of the fires to smoke and talk about the cattle or hunting, tell narratives of personal adventure, and so on, the younger men try their strength in wrestling

½ [i.e., various wild bulbs and roots. – Analyst]

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the */naras* and *tsama* are preferred most of all, on account of both the water content of the flesh and the food value of the kernel. The Topnaars in the vicinity of Walvis Bay still live for a considerable part of the year almost exclusively on the */naras*, and hence are often known by the tribal name of */Naranin*.

All the food obtained is generally shared in common. If game is brought home, the whole camp gathers about the hut of the possessor till all the meat is consumed, and so too with everything else. Even to-day in South-West Africa if a Nama has anything to eat, e.g. a piece of meat or bread, he is bound by old custom to share it with anyone coming up to him. Failure to do so would expose him to the greatest contempt. The communal meal, as we shall see, is one of the outstanding features in the ceremonial life of the people; while in ordinary life their hospitality is so generous and far-reaching that their economic system has in consequence been termed by several writers a sort of communism.

There is as a rule no fixed time for eating. Only the morning meal, taken after the cows have been milked and driven out to pasture, has a special name, *soboa*. The time and place of the other meals are regulated according to circumstance: in camp by the return of the herds from pasture, on the march by outspans, on the hunt by a successful shot, and so on. The preparation of meals is the task of the women, and generally each woman prepares the food for her family on the fire in the hut. Normally both men and women now eat together, each family by itself, but there are certain communal meals in which the sexes are strictly separated or in which only the members of one sex may take part. According to Kolb, however, men and women among the Cape Hottentots always ate apart, all the people of each sex eating together. This separation of the sexes at meals he attributes to the fear that one of the women might be menstruating, and would thus contaminate any men associating with her or coming near her.[1] There is evidence also, as we shall see in discussing the boys' puberty ceremonies, that among the Naman the men at least formerly ate together and apart from their wives.

There is little information as to the existence of food taboos among the Hottentots in more recent times. The only well-authenticated instance is in the case of the hare, which in all the tribes might be eaten only by women and children, and was strictly forbidden to men

[1] Op. cit., 122–3.

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Nowadays each ox and cow
231 552 [192] is generally given a name of Dutch origin, to which it often answers; formerly cattle were designated rather according to their colour or physical development. Schultze records nineteen such terms in use among the Naman for horned cattle, six for goats, and three for sheep.[1]

231 425 438 Cattle may be acquired in several different ways. Every child in a wealthy family may have some animals set aside for it soon after birth, and a portion is usually given at marriage, both to sons and to daughters, while a man's herds are also divided after his death among his heirs. Cattle may further be acquired by means of barter with such objects as milk pots and weapons, and in recent times also European trade goods. Wandres mentions the case of a wealthy cattle-owner known to him among the Bondelswarts, who laid the foundations of his prosperity by the manufacture of wooden milk pails which he bartered for cattle. We know also that cattle-raiding, both among the Hottentots themselves and on other peoples, such as the OvaHerero, was a common practice in the past, but we have no definite record as to how cattle obtained in this way were divided.

231 425 463 Service with Europeans in order to obtain the means of purchasing cattle was common already in Kolb's time, and is possibly the principal method employed nowadays. Another common method, in use among the Hottentots themselves, is the herding of another man's cattle in return for part of the increase. A wealthy cattle-owner will place some of his stock under the care of an impoverished tribesman, allowing him to use the milk for his *own nourishment* and to claim half the increase. With good management a herdsman can in a few years acquire quite a respectable herd of his own in this way. Even young boys will hire their services to cattle-owners, receiving at first an annual payment of one or more sheep or goats, according to the size of the herds under their care, and acquiring later the right to half of the increase. A good herdsman generally remains with his master for life, even although he has accumulated some stock of his own. This is looked after by his children or his relatives, while he himself becomes the chief herdsman of his master.[2]

234 462 The milk of their cows is the staple article of diet with the Hottentots. The milking is done by the women and girls, and only

[1] Op. cit., 264-7.
[2] Wandres, "Ueber das Recht der Namas," 677-8; Kolb, *Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung*, 78-9; Tindall, *Grass Namaqualand*, 42.

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exceptionally by the men.[1] The milk secretion of the cows is periodical and dependent upon calving and the needs of the calf. The flow ceases when the calf is able to fend for itself; the cow then "becomes dry", as the Hottentots put it. In times of good pasture some cows may continue to yield milk up to shortly before the next calving; in dry years, on the other hand, many of them occasionally yield so little milk that the calf hungers, and milking for domestic purposes is naturally out of the question. At milking, done early in the morning and again when the cows have returned in the evening from pasture, the calves are first allowed to drink for a while. Then the woman comes up with her wooden pail, drives away the calf, and after binding together the hind legs of the cow to keep it still procedes to do the milking. All the cows are milked at one sitting. If a cow refuses to give milk, as may happen when its calf has died prematurely, it is induced to do so by the substitution either of another calf sewn up in the skin of the dead one or merely of the stuffed skin, or else somebody stands behind it and blows hard into its vulva while the milking is taking place.[2]

The herding of the cattle is simplified to some extent by the fact that permanent water is found at only a few spots, known to both men and cattle, and both also know where water is to be found after good rains. These spots usually serve as the sites for the encampment. The oxen, only occasionally required for riding or for draught, need no special care in herding. They take their drink at the water, then go out to graze in the veld and rove at large, returning about every other day or two to drink. If wanted for work they can then easily be secured; if not, they rest in the camp during the remainder of the day, and then in the cool of the night proceed to the veld as before. The cows are driven to pasture every morning after milking, and left to graze unattended, till the attraction of the young calves brings them home to the kraal of their own accord at night. Old cows no longer calving are kept for slaughter, and allowed to graze in the same way as the oxen. They go further into the veld than the mother animals, and there find better grass and pasture longer. The calves are placed at night, after drinking, in a special enclosure of thorn bushes or stone, open to the sky, while their mothers sleep freely in the vicinity. In

[1] In this respect the Hottentots differ fundamentally from the great majority of the cattle-keeping Bantu tribes, among whom milking is essentially the task of the men, the women having very little indeed to do with the cattle, even, in some cases, being strictly prohibited from all contact with them.

[2] Schultze, op. cit., 157-8; Kolb, op. cit., 73-80; von Francois, op. cit., 158.

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114 by them, although the technological processes involved are dealt with to some extent by Kolb and more fully still by Schultze. But the social side of the industries—forms of work, economic motives, division of labour, and so on—has received hardly any attention at all. It is difficult therefore to give an adequate picture of the industrial activities of the Hottentots. This difficulty is increased by the fact that ever since contact with Europeans was established there has been a gradual substitution of European goods for native products, until at the present time the productive work of the Hottentots, where it is still carried on, has to a considerable extent acquired a new character.

594 The main economic unit in Hottentot life, as far as one can judge, is the family. Each family not only has its own herds and flocks, thus providing for the greater part of its subsistence, but in a large degree also manufactures the objects required for its domestic purposes. The construction of the huts, the making of whose mats is still an important native craft, has already been described. The other forms of industry may be grouped under the main heads of skin-dressing, netting, pottery, wood-carving, stone- and metal-work.

291 Before the Europeans came into the country, the skins of domestic
294 animals and game provided the sole material for the clothing of the Hottentots, as well as for a number of other objects. Nowadays,
[177] except perhaps in a few remote places, clothing is almost entirely of European pattern and material, but skins are still used for other
[462] purposes. Among the Cape Hottentots, it would appear from Kolb's account,[1] the preparation of skins was mainly the work of the men. Skins used for making clothing, karosses, etc., were dressed by the craftsman repeatedly rubbing into the fleshy side as much fat as possible, and then beating them hard with the kirri, until they became quite tough and smooth; or they were alternately rubbed with cowdung and fat, and then carefully dried in the sun. They were then sewn
[412] together with sinews, generally taken from the back of an ox, the pointed leg-bone of a bird being used as an awl. Ox hides were either used for lining the hut, or cut into thongs with which objects were bound on the backs of pack-oxen. To loosen the hair the fresh skin was sprinkled with ashes and water, then rolled up and exposed for a day or two to the heat of the sun, and after depilation it was rendered supple by being rubbed in with fat. Finally, if required for thongs, it was pegged out on the ground and cut into long strips of about the same width by means of a sharp iron blade.

[1] Op. cit., 110–12.

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325 Great Namaqua tribes obtained most of their copper from the Little
177 Namaqua to the south, and the BeChwana to the east. And Wikar states that the Naman preferred not to work their own metal, but
326 hired Herero smiths to come and work iron and copper into beads
439 for them, paying them an ewe as a daily wage.[1] Certainly in the eighteenth century the Naman only worked metal in very small quantities, obtaining almost all their iron and copper implements and ornaments by barter from the OvaHerero and BeChwana. Among the Cape Hottentots also the production of these metals was so limited even in the seventeenth century that the Dutch from the first did an active trade with them in copper and iron goods. Since then the ease with which European metal wares, superior in every way to those of native production, could be obtained, has caused the old native craft of smelting ore to disappear completely. At the present time the raw material, in the form of iron, wire, copper, and more rarely tin, is all obtained from Europeans. It is then fashioned by the men into such ornaments as armbands, rings, and earrings, which are often decorated with incised rows of dots or lines of zigzag, chevron or fishbone pattern.[2]

Division of Labour

462 In these industrial occupations, as well as in the other economic activities, there appears to be no fixed division of labour, save as between the two sexes, and most of the work is for purely domestic purposes. The husband supervises the herding and pasturing of the cattle and the movements of the family from place to place, although where a number of families live together both activities may be regulated by the men in common. The men also hunt, here again either singly or more often in company. They do all the work in wood and metal, make their own powder-horns and pipes, etc. The women complete the huts, after the men have erected the framework, milk the cattle, seek edible roots and berries in the veld, prepare the food, see to water and firewood, and look after the huts. They also make the reed mats for the huts, were formerly the potters, grind *buchu* and mineral powder, and so on. The preparation of skins, finally, is the work of both men and women; the former also make the skin bags, thongs, and lashes, while the latter cut and sew most of the clothing, karosses, and skins for the floor.

[1] Op. cit., 55.
[2] Schultze, op. cit., 448–51.

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
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They commonly wear ornaments on their head, or else, as we do with poodles, they shave their hair into full moons, crescent moons, or stars. On their foreheads they wear corals, serrated shells, bronze coins, and knotted hairs of cows and other animals, etc. Almost all, except the very poor, wear necklaces of coral, glass, or bronze beads. These they acquire from the Noble Company in exchange for prime cattle. On their elbows as a rule they wear ivory bracelets, on their wrists copper ones.

CHAP. XII.

Buildings.

Apart from their huts they have no houses, nor shelter, nor dwelling-place, for they are always engaged in pasturing their herds and flocks, and are accustomed to wander through uncultivated wildernesses. Their little cabins have but one opening, and their roof and gable and walls consist of the leaves and stalks of the African gladiolus, the bulbs of which they eat instead of bread (our countrymen call it Hottentot's bread). They are so closely built that they protect the dwellers from rain and other inclemencies of the weather. Poles, gutters, and shingles are made from small branches of trees. The porch is arched and winding. Each husband digs out a hollow on the floor, in which, as on a bed, he spreads a sheep-skin; he then wraps himself up in another sheep-skin so coolly that neither head, nor foot, nor hand can be seen, assuming the posture naturally taken by the child in the womb. The wife sleeps higher up on the edge of the man's hollow bed. This little cabin holds fifteen, sometimes more, lodgers. They place the huts on hill or plain, or among trees on the banks of rivers, and lay them out in a circle at a distance of five or six paces from one another. In this way they protect the cattle, which are enclosed within these bounds, from the attack rather of wild beasts than of an enemy. But when the chiefs give the signal to move to a new place, they warn their subjects by kindling huge fires. Then the women alone collect all the stock, and all the gear which at other times is cast into leathern bags and carried on their own shoulders, and place them together with the hut on pack-oxen, while the men drive away the forces of the enemy.

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CHAP. XVI.

Means of Livelihood.

Nature has taught them gluttony, their slothful indigence teaches them temperance. They have no variety of food; from marshes and mounds they root up sword-lilies; with the leaves of this plant they roof their huts, the bulbs they use for bread. These are dug up by the women, for it is the women who provide food for the men; the men look after the huts and the herds, or else are occupied in war. The only interruption to this diet is in the event of a marriage or a birth, when they slaughter an ox, or at least a sheep, to provide a feast for their friends, unless some wild animal should happen to be taken. They also eat the leaves of many kinds of sedum.[77]) They drink the milk of cows and sheep. The women do the milking at fixed times of dawn and dusk, and they make it into butter by an elegant process. They skin a bird, and turn the skin inside out so that the feathers are inside; they tie this to a hollow stick and shake it so that the milk is separated into butter and whey.[78]) With the butter they smear their heads; the whey they drink. They do not know how to make cheese, nor do they like it. They drink nothing except milk and water; they eat only fish with scales, not eels, nor rays, etc., nor any sort of shellfish or oysters.[79]) But there is a sort of very sweet bream with scales in which they take great delight.

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[77]) Still commonly known in S. Africa as *Hotnotskruyd* (Hottentots Sg) or *aster Sg* (= *Mesembryanthemum edule*).

[78]) A more accurate description of the butter-making process is given by Grevenbroek (see below, p. 307) and by Schreyer, who says: "Die Milch schütten sie in einen ledern Beutel rauchen Buck, in welchem unten ein Löchlein, welchen sie zubinden, alsdenn nehmen ihr zwey den Milch-Buck, leder bey einen Ende, schütten und werffen die Milch so lang in einander, bis Butter wird, als denn lassen sie die Butter-Milch durch das Löchlein abfliessen, thun die Butter heraus, welche dann, wie leichtlich nachzudenken, voll Haar ist, das einen davon erkelt; Essen aber erkelt nicht, denn sie können alles hinein essen, weran wir einen Ekel und abscheu haben" (*Reise nach dem Kaplande*, reprint 1831, 68). [They shake the milk in a skin bag with the hairy surface turned inward. At the bottom is a small hole, which they bind fast. Two of them then take the milk-sack, each at one end, and shake it about vigorously until the milk turns into butter. Then they allow the whey to run out through the hole, and take out the butter, which, as can easily be imagined, is full of hair, so that one fairly shy of it, but this they do not mind, for they eat many a thing which we avoid.] The modern Hottentots employ a somewhat similar method of making butter, which they eat either fresh or dried with various edible plants (cf. Schapera, op. cit., 207).

[79]) This certainly does not apply to the "Strandlopers", who ate all kinds of fish (see above, p. 57).